

Internal Form for Oral History File

This file contains the oral history of: Shelley Gonçalves

Recorded on: February 5, 2026

Recorded by: Julissa Gomez Ruvalcaba

Recorded in (location): Oakland Public Library, Zen Booth

For the Purpose of: To expand Oakland's 16th street station stories and record the stories of West Oakland residents, previous 16th street station employees and train riders, and family members of 16th street station train employees.

Oral History Description

Narrator's Age:

Narrator City/State: Oakland, California

Brief Summary:

In this interview, Shelley Gonçalves, second generation Oaklander of Portuguese descent, speaks about her Oakland neighborhood; picking up her great aunt and great uncle from the 16th street train station; the station's architecture design; possibility of restoring the station to its former state; ways to use the station as a local community resource; explaining Oakland Heritage Alliance's work with 16th street station; Oakland housing development and its impact; other ways to use 16th street station aside from housing development; the station's activity level in the mid-forties and fifties and Black community businesses; different between 16th street station and Jack London square; the significance of 16th street station and her hopes for the station; explains what the station means to her; describes 16th street station as the hub of Oakland; historic importance of 16th street station for West Oakland and Southern Pacific railroad; why her family migrated to and settled in Oakland; and Portuguese customs and community traditions.

Subject:

Holding Institution:

Accession Number:

Collection Number:

File Gonçalves_shelley_01_02042026_RR_RodeC00003_2 & goncalves_shelley_01Part2_02042026_TrMic summary: In this interview, Shelley Gonçalves, second generation Oaklander of Portuguese descent, speaks about her Oakland neighborhood; picking up her great aunt and great uncle from the 16th street train station; the station's architecture design; possibility of restoring the station to its former state; ways to use the station as a local community resource; explaining Oakland Heritage Alliance's work with 16th street station; Oakland housing development and its impact; other ways to use 16th street station aside from housing development; the station's activity level in the mid-forties and fifties and Black community businesses; different between 16th street station and Jack London square; the significance of 16th street station and her hopes for the station; explains what the station means to her; describes 16th street station as the hub of Oakland; historic importance of 16th street station for West Oakland and Southern Pacific railroad; why her family migrated to and settled in Oakland; and Portuguese customs and community traditions.

Interview with: Shelley Gonçalves

Interviewed by: Julissa Gomez Ruvalcaba

Transcriber: Julissa Gomez Ruvalcaba

[Interview #01: February 5, 2026]

[Begin Audio File: Gonçalves_shelley_01_02042026_RR_RodeC00003_2 & goncalves_shelley_01Part2_02042026_TrMic]

[00:00:00] **Interviewer:** Okay. We'll do that then. Okay, we are recording. This is Julissa Gomez Ruvalcaba, the 2025 - 2026 Oral History Fellow for the California State Railroad Museum interviewing Shelley Gonçalves. Today is February 5th, Thursday 2026¹ at 12:09 PM. This oral history is being conducted in the Zen booth at the Oakland Public Library. Before we begin this recording, Shelley, do I have your permission to record this oral history and the permission of State Parks to publish this transcript in part or its entirety and you can say yes or no?

[00:00:42] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yes.

[00:00:43] **Interviewer:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being here. We've been working on like scheduling this for a really long time.

[00:00:50] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yes. [laughs]

[00:00:52] **Interviewer:** I wanna first—I guess get to know you. So can you state what is your name? Where are you from? Where were you born?

[00:01:03] **Shelley Goncalves:** My full name is Shelley Marie Theresa Gonçalves. I was born and raised in Oakland, California and I still live here. I'm the only one of my family that does still live in Oakland.

[00:01:22] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

[00:01:23] **Shelley Goncalves:** And what else was it that you wanted to?

[00:01:26] **Interviewer:** Where do you currently live? Specifically in Oakland?

[00:01:29] **Shelley Goncalves:** I live at the top of Harrison. And I like it because I can walk. It's easily walkable to Grand Lakeshore, Piedmont Avenues. There's an actual theater—Oh my goodness a movie theater! on Piedmont and one on Grand. And it's a mixed neighborhood of apartments and older homes. It's very—well, Oakland is very beautiful, so there's a lot of old growth, some beautiful old homes. And of course you can't beat Oakland as far as I'm concerned in the country for weather [slight laugh].

[00:02:12] **Interviewer:** It has good weather.

¹ Correction made by my transcriber, original audio says “2016”.

[00:02:13] **Shelley Goncalves:** It has perfect weather.

[00:02:16] **Interviewer:** We're recording this oral history to talk about 16th Street Station specifically in West Oakland. Can you talk—what is your connection to the 16th Street station?

[00:02:28] **Shelley Goncalves:** When I was young about I'd say between eight and 12, I lived—well, we've spent a lot of time with my maternal grandparents. And my grandfather came through Ellis Island then he came out here West, but a lot of his family stayed on the East Coast specifically New Bedford, Massachusetts, which is absolutely loaded with Portuguese to this day [laughs]. And one of his sisters would come out every summer and they would take the train. So, his sister and her husband— my great aunt and great uncle—we'd go to pick them up at the West, you know, at the 16th Street station. And they'd stay for a while—quite a while in those days. And then we'd take them back there and they'd go back home.

[00:03:25] **Shelley Goncalves:** And I remember even as a child being kind of in awe, stunned how beautiful the station was inside. I didn't know, of course, you know, the Beaux style or you know what it was, but I was impressed by the simple grandeur of it—the light. The way they, you know— used. The way they strategically placed windows, et cetera. The light was incredible and it was spacious, clean. A big, almost like church pew style, you know, seats. And it was exciting. It was fun because the train was right there—came, you know, pulled in right there. So, it was very brief, but I always remembered the building and us. It was exciting to go there and pick them up in my grandfather's old Mercury car [laughs]. And take them back there and I really hope that they have the funds and the money and can get it together to somehow put this on, you know, the National Historic Registry of places and basically bring it back to its former glory. It would be great.

[00:04:46] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Let's go into that then about the current state of the station. So how do you feel seeing the station in its current state? Right now?

[00:05:01] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, apparently there's been some effort. There's a farmer's market in front of it. Of course, keeping up with the times. But if it could actually be returned to be some type of transit hub that would be awesome.

[00:05:17] **Interviewer:** Do you think that would be possible given how there is the Jack London station in Emeryville Station?

[00:05:25] **Shelley Goncalves:** Um, sure. Because Jack London, especially for people that may be walking is still a little ways from West Oakland and certainly Emeryville is. And West Oakland is for quite a few years now is a growing and diverse community, so I think people would like it and benefit from it.

[00:05:51] **Interviewer:** How do you think—what things do you think the station could be used to support West Oakland?

[00:05:59] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, it's kind of like here [refers to Oakland Public Library] they could also—because it's such a beautiful and open space. They could have brochures about things that go on in Oakland either arts wise or helping people because people don't know, you know? And a lot of people like to see something like I do visually in a paper form or up on a poster or what have you. And there's a large aging population in Oakland and it's nice to read something, see something like that, you know, in print. My point is in print and of course farmer's markets would be—are always great no matter—a small farmer's market is just fine. Versus, I'd like to see it kind of or even a cafe [sighs], if you will. That's sells only what the farmer's market produces, you know. Only fresh, you know, food—vegans for people your age, vegan stuff for people your age [laughs]. But my point is produced in Oakland.

[00:07:17] **Interviewer:** So keep it local.

[00:07:19] **Shelley Goncalves:** Absolutely. That's the whole point [laughs] of thriving, of reenergizing an area of local local commerce because people have a lot to give.

[00:07:34] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Then I'm trying to think of— so what's your current—are you aware of the current plans for the station then?

[00:07:44] **Shelley Goncalves:** Um, refresh my memory.

[00:07:47] **Interviewer:** So the station is a historical landmark, so just recently it became a historical landmark meaning that—

[00:07:54] **Shelley Goncalves:** Nationally?

[00:07:55] **Interviewer:** Yes.

[00:07:56] **Shelley Goncalves:** Okay. Oh great.

[00:07:56] **Interviewer:** So it's on the register.

[00:07:57] **Shelley Goncalves:** Okay. Great.

[00:07:59] **Interviewer:** Okay, Oakland Heritage Alliance worked for many, many years, like 40 years.

[00:08:03] **Shelley Goncalves:** Oh [surprised reaction and expression].

[00:08:04] **Interviewer:** To officially get it on the Historical Landmark Registry, meaning that it cannot be torn down.

[00:08:10] **Shelley Goncalves:** Great.

[00:08:11] **Interviewer:** Which is amazing. So that was what they've been working on for so long. They're now pivoting to what you were saying, how can we, OHA use this space, which is 16th Street Station, to support West Oakland and to really remind people this station is important, and it really shaped what is Oakland as a whole.

[00:08:34] **Shelley Goncalves:** Right.

[00:08:34] **Interviewer:** So they're working right now to raise money.

[00:08:38] **Shelley Goncalves:** I was gonna say that's the main thing.

[00:08:41] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:08:42] **Shelley Goncalves:** And I would like to see the Oakland Heritage Alliance put a lot more pressure on the mayor and the city council to get this done. They have money they spend on whatever they want, so, you know, departments, you know, department heads, you know, et cetera, don't get me started. So, I would like to see them really get aggressive with the Oakland City Council, whatever department, you know, they have to get the money from 'cause that's what it takes is being vocal with them in their face, so to speak.

[00:09:16] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. I think they're doing that being [Shelley gestures for the Interviewer to repeat herself]— I think, I believe they are doing that being very vocal.

[00:09:22] **Shelley Goncalves:** Sure they are good [smiles].

[00:09:23] **Interviewer:** And having the events and so with that the land that is 16th Street Station has been purchased by a land developer and—

[00:09:33] **Shelley Goncalves:** Oh, that's right.

[00:09:34] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:09:34] **Shelley Goncalves:** I read that.

[00:09:35] **Interviewer:** And the plan is to build condos.

[00:09:39] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yuuck.

[00:09:40] **Interviewer:** So that's kind of—my question to you is with your opinion on that. I do wanna preference it that there was a plan one to have it surrounded by condos. Now, it seems like there is going to be condos beside it, kind of this coexistence, but still condos nonetheless. What is the—your opinion on that specifically?

[00:10:05] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, you know, we all know that there's a quote unquote housing crisis and downtown Oakland—places in Oakland, I see these high rises all the

time. They don't look filled because—and I get it, developers. Oakland needs development money and these are private developers and they need to make a profit so with the egregious, you know, licensing and fees, et cetera, which I believe in some cases or Oakland's trying to, you know, cut down, it's made it almost impossible for developers. Of course they have to— they can't come in and provide housing for free. That being said it's overdone, I think. It's overdone in the sense there's already plenty of condos. They're just unaffordable, so they need to make them— the city needs to come in, if you know, sorry, it's our taxpayer money, but. And make them affordable with the developer for people so that they can— low income people can actually purchase them. I don't like the idea of condos high-rises. It would be great if they were like, maximum two stories and like townhouses. That's just aesthetically better and guess what? It's more homey. It feels more homey for the person. So the condos, as far as I'm concerned are overdone. They're probably doing it because again, it's the most cost efficient, but it's certainly not aesthetically pleasing. I'm glad they've cut it back and it's a lot of work I'm sure and a negotiation and back and forth and a balance between a private developer and, you know, a public interest.

[00:11:47] **Interviewer:** So I'm seeing that perhaps you're not a fan of condos [Shelley laughs]. How do you— what's your take on it being beside West not, you know, being by 16th Street Station, if that coexistence?

[00:12:04] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, I think it's—I don't think it's a good idea at all. First of all, you're, if it's a transit station, you're gonna have a lot of people or people coming through gonna be very busy all the time. Would you wanna live next to a transit station where, or where there's constant activity and you know, people— all people, you know, day and night, what have you? Mmmh, maybe not so much. But more importantly, I just think that and I've been in condos before, they're just—you don't get to know your neighbors. It's more of a sterile isolating environment.

[00:12:44] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So the station itself is currently closed. So there's no would be no like, quote unquote activity.

[00:12:54] **Shelley Goncalves:** There's no—

[00:12:55] **Interviewer:** But there is a lot of activity around the area.

[00:12:57] **Shelley Goncalves:** Right.

[00:12:59] **Interviewer:** But I want to go into that topic of why do you think the station closed rather than people trying to put more money into it? To keep it open? So it officially closed, I believe, like in 1998.

[00:13:13] **Shelley Goncalves:** Okay.

[00:13:14] **Interviewer:** It was very active in the forties.

[00:13:16] **Shelley Goncalves:** Right.

[00:13:16] **Interviewer:** I would say even in the fifties. But then there were, you know, there was an earthquake which did damage to the station then there were other stations that were created like Emeryville, Jack London.

[00:13:29] **Shelley Goncalves:** Right.

[00:13:30] **Interviewer:** Why do you believe that the station closed down or there wasn't any money put into to revive the station so people could continue to use it?

[00:13:41] **Shelley Goncalves:** I don't know. I know in the fifties and sixties when we, you know, visited it—that was in its heyday. I don't know. And there are historical buildings and places, you know, around the country that have received that decline.

[00:14:00] **Shelley Goncalves:** Probably because it was in West Oakland. And West Oakland was and still is—has a lot of crime in certain areas you know—the reputation of West Oakland, unfortunately, after the Black community basically left it— the Black community businesses left —the heyday of West Oakland was obviously after the war, during the war when there was nothing but Black-owned businesses like on seventh Street and, you know, it was thriving. And so once the war ended and everybody came back and there were no more shipyard jobs for the women and the Pullmans, I guess, you know, pulled back the trains— roots pulled back. I don't know exactly what happened. I wasn't born then yet [slight laugh]. It was part of the devolvment of West Oakland as a Black owned community business, highly functioning, you know, place.

[00:15:10] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. So you're saying that it was basically the economic state—

[00:15:17] **Shelley Goncalves:** Absolutely.

[00:15:18] **Interviewer:** Is what led to the station to deteriorate?

[00:15:21] **Shelley Goncalves:** Absolutely.

[00:15:24] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. I want to kind of jump back into your experience with the station because 1940s—you said you weren't born then?

[00:15:37] **Shelley Goncalves:** No.

[00:15:37] **Interviewer:** So when—what was the time period of when you took the train or you would pick up your relatives from the train station?

[00:15:46] **Shelley Goncalves:** I picked up our relatives in the—I would say mid-fifties.

[00:15:51] **Interviewer:** Okay. So in the mid—

[00:15:51] **Shelley Goncalves:** Mid to late fifties.

[00:15:53] **Interviewer:** So in the mid-fifties it was still very much active.

[00:15:57] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yeah. People took the train. You know, from the East Coast to the West Coast [laughs] and I'm sure all places in between.

[00:16:08] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Did you ever take the train or is it more so picking up?

[00:16:13] **Shelley Goncalves:** I've taken the train from the Jack London, you know, as an adult from the Jack London station which I love the Jack London station. It's modern, clean, not too big. Very easy access, but the great thing of course about the West Oakland station is the building—in and of itself.

[00:16:34] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Can you explain that then the difference between the 16th Street station and also Jack London. Is like—what other differences are there between the two of 'em since you been in both?

[00:16:51] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, certainly now I would say, you know, the Jack London Street Station is at obviously the hub of Jack London Square. You can get easily from there to anywhere and okay, Jack London Square is a great example. They have tons of condos down there that they built, you know, decades ago. I don't find them particularly appealing [laughs]. You know, there's restaurants, there's all kinds of things. Whereas, the West Oakland station looks like even with condos on one side has a more open field, you know. It's just more open. It's not densely in the heart of downtown. So they're completely different in feel and of course in building and structure one's— brand new, one's, you know, preserved.

[00:17:43] **Interviewer:** Hypothetically, let's say that West Oakland—the 16th Street station was still open and then so was Jack London.

[00:17:52] **Shelley Goncalves:** Okay.

[00:17:53] **Interviewer:** Which one would you perhaps want to go to?

[00:17:57] **Shelley Goncalves:** I would probably wanna go to the West Oakland one just because of its beauty [laughs throughout]. But I am— when I've taken it. I am five minutes away from where I live to the Jack London Square. But there, like I said, there's many people, you know, in West Oakland and even maybe, you know, there's many people on that side of Oakland that would probably take an in temescal, you know, coming into Oakland that would maybe take the West Oakland. And I don't know it depends on, of course, how much money they can raise. But even if it's never a transportation hub, it could be a great venue for events, music, live, entertainment, you know, that type of thing.

[00:18:50] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. I wanna talk about the significance of 16th Street Station. What would you say is the significance of the station?

[00:19:01] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, first of all—the architecture. The fact that it's a historic—you don't get architecture like that anymore. You don't get materials like that anymore. You don't get workers, builders like that anymore. That's gone. That's why it's so important to preserve it. And I would— and—to make use of those types of buildings, again for the modern age. For, you know, for actual usage now, as an example where the Whole Foods is on Harrison and I think it's Bay— that was an old Cadillac dealership. And the top of the roof is still, you know, that they kept the building of course, and they put a Whole Foods in there. Great. They made use of a great old space. So that's what, you know, that's what needs to be—I'm not saying Whole Foods should be there [laughs], but they could have multiple things.

[00:20:06] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. I know that some people have envisioned the station kind of what you're speaking about. How there could be like a cafe like maybe on top or on the bottom.

[00:20:17] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yes.

[00:20:18] **Interviewer:** And then people could like maybe go in and out of the station and if there are any— there is any housing they could be like besides the station.

[00:20:26] **Shelley Goncalves:** Besides the station. Yeah.

[00:20:27] **Interviewer:** Right. So never really enbroaching on it essentially.

[00:20:32] **Shelley Goncalves:** Exactly.

[00:20:34] **Interviewer:** I wanted to ask what does a station mean to you?

[00:20:37] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, for me it's a fond memory of my fam— you know, of a time pass. My grandparents, my—that great aunt living in Oakland at that time when people took the train and yes, we drove to the train station, but you know there were hardly any cars. We took my—we took buses, we took public transportation. It's a AC transit. I don't even know if it was called that then, but it was around [laughs], you know. So for me, it's just a fond memory, a link to the past. Oakland has that and it's great to see it being preserved.

[00:21:29] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. I asked earlier if—did you ever take 16th Street Station at all? [Shelley indicates she couldn't hear the question asked to Interviewer] Did you ever take 16th Street Station at all?

[00:21:37] **Shelley Goncalves:** Me personally?

[00:21:38] **Interviewer:** Yes.

[00:21:39] **Shelley Goncalves:** No.

[00:21:39] **Interviewer:** Okay. So it was just picking up your—

[00:21:41] **Shelley Goncalves:** It was picking up our relatives.

[00:21:44] **Interviewer:** And did they ever talk about their experience?

[00:21:47] **Shelley Goncalves:** No, we didn't. You know, because it was, we were children and it was like new and exciting and different. And occasional. So it was always just kind of a wide-eyed experience for us.

[00:22:07] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Was there like a type of ritual that your family would do when they would pick up your relatives or drop 'em off at all to the station?

[00:22:15] **Shelley Goncalves:** No.

[00:22:16] **Interviewer:** Just typical pickup.

[00:22:17] **Shelley Goncalves:** Just typical pickup and drop off. Yep. With the old suitcases [laughs],

[00:22:23] **Interviewer:** The—

[00:22:24] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yes, the hand— the. Yeah, the handles and the hard sides. And [laughs]

[00:22:30] **Interviewer:** I wanna ask, why do you think the station was placed 16th Street Station was placed specifically in West Oakland? In terms of location.

[00:22:38] **Shelley Goncalves:** I don't know that much of the history, but clearly it was the hub, you know, close to the ports, close to. Well, clearly it was more West Oakland was more of a hub than may— than downtown, maybe I don't know.

[00:23:00] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:23:01] **Shelley Goncalves:** Close to, I wouldn't even say the Bay Bridge, the ferries that went to the Bay Bridge [slight laugh]. So, and West Oakland is still very strategically located.

[00:23:15] **Interviewer:** Can you talk about that a little bit? What do you mean so strategically located?

[00:23:22] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, when the ships come in with all their cargo, I believe the West Oak—the—Oakland, Port of Oakland is the third largest container ship port in the country. I might be wrong. Maybe it's just California, but it's still huge. And then all the trucks have to come in to get the, you know, to get it and ship it out. And that's all part of, I don't know if it's actually West Oakland, but lower, you know. And then, now just access to the freeways again, to the ports, to the city.

[00:23:59] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:24:00] **Shelley Goncalves:** So. As they say in real estate, location, location, location [laughs].

[00:24:08] **Interviewer:** It's a great location.

[00:24:09] **Shelley Goncalves:** Yeah.

[00:24:11] **Interviewer:** You spoke about West Oakland and 16th Street Station a little bit together. What would you say— what does 16th Street Station symbolize for the West Oakland community?

[00:24:30] **Shelley Goncalves:** [Long pause before she begins speaking] You know, obviously there's a group that thinks a lot of it and has spent all these years and time and money trying to preserve it. So, it's a part of West Oakland history and the S & P (Southern Pacific) railroad that shouldn't be forgotten. And more importantly can be reused, rebirthed into because of the building itself.

[00:24:59] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:00] ²**Shelley Goncalves:** So. I don't know, I don't live in West Oakland. I don't know how West Oaklanders ³is feel, but I'm sure they would love to see it more active. Cafes, restaurants, farmers markets, event spaces.

[00:25:15] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:16] **Shelley Goncalves:** A lot could happen there because of the building itself. Oh, and where it's located [laughs].

[00:25:21] **Interviewer:** I wanted to ask you if you wanted to expand at all about your memories of 16th Street Station and your family?

[00:25:40] **Shelley Goncalves:** Well, as I said, my memories are just summer times dropping off and picking up my great aunt and great uncle. I am second generation Oaklander of Portuguese descent, 100% Portuguese descent. Both my sides of my grandparents immigrated from the Azores and Madeira, and at that time, apparently at the turn of the century, there was a huge push to get Mediterranean, Southern European, European immigrants. They allowed them in through Ellis Island. So, some of them actually came all the way out here.

[00:26:27] **Shelley Goncalves:** My grandparents and I also have a large contingent of family in San Diego on my father's side. One of my great aunts went to San Diego with

² Audio goncalves_shelley_01Part2_02042026_TrMic is used for the last portion of this transcript

³ Changed West Oakland to West Oaklanders based on Narrator's corrections

her husband and settled. And they came to the coast. I asked—now that you say that—I asked my grandmother once, *"Why did you settle here in Oakland?"* Because that time — well before that time, there also were a lot of Portuguese that went to Hawaii and they worked the pineapple plantations there. And I said, *"We could have been born in Hawaii. Why did you settle here? Why didn't you go to Hawaii?"* And she said, *"The, the waters and the fishing and the weather here were just like home."* And that kind of took me aback. That surprised me. I realized, oh, of course people settle where they—where— that of something that reminds them of home. That's why the Germans are in Wisconsin or what have you, you know [laughs]. So in those days the Bay was pristine. You could drop your line just like in the Bay. And there was no pollution. There was no— those little Bay shrimp were literally from the Bay and they were fishermen, so they fished the Bay. They fished half Moon Bay in Santa Cruz and then of course they ate what they caught. Put on a barbecue every couple of weeks for the neighborhood which was mostly their Portuguese friends and relatives. We lived in Maxwell— the Maxwell Park area. We lived walking distance from a great aunt—two other aunts. So family actually lived not that far from each other in those days. And I remember the fishing being ah now that I look back, being incredible.

[00:28:30] **Interviewer:** And what do you mean by incredible in terms of them just constantly or?

[00:28:34] **Shelley Goncalves:** The ease. Yeah. And now realizing the pollution, the freshness, you know, the variety. I remember watching them take an octopus head and bury it in one of my youngest sister's godfather's backyard because—for fertilizer. My grandfather would—with his catch if there were catfish where he was, he would bring home the catfish because they lived for a long time. And in those days you didn't have—you had several rooms [pauses] before you got to your kitchen. The kitchen wasn't the back door to the yard. There was a pie room and where and also where the mangle was and where the ironing board was then there was the washing machine. They didn't have a dryer, so there was a clothes line and there was also, which I think is, it's too bad they don't have them anymore— a cement tub where you could soak things, you know, before you put them in the washing machine. So he'd fill that up with water and put the catfish in there and let us watch them 'cause they'd swim around for three days. They made—they used the whole animal. They used— when they caught bass or perch or whatever it was that was running, they'd used the whole animal and they made what they called fish head soup. Oh my God. And so it was basically a clear broth out of the fish parts in the head and I'd—we'd come in and they'd be sipping it and the eyes would be floating in the soup because they considered the eyes a delicacy [laughs]. I mean, when I think back on these things, I'm like, oh my God. It made us, you know, we, it made us practically sick. But my point is they used everything they had. Everything was fresh. Everything grows in Oakland. My grandmother and my grandfather had huge back homegrown gardens. My paternal grandfather had chickens on his land in East Oakland. So they had chicken, they had eggs, they had fish, they had their own garden. Oh, and the men were famous for making their own wine in their basement [laughs]. Yeah and then they'd share it with [laughs], you know, have a party, what have you. It was a very different time and now I realize as I'm older how amazing it was.

[00:31:24] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm. Um—

[00:31:26] **Shelley Goncalves:** How community oriented and centered and natural. Everything, you know, then of course, you know, the big thing for a while now has been organic and we all know how much that costs. Everything was organic then. They grew it themselves. They did it themselves and you know, I mean—chemicals were starting to come in of course, but they were, they didn't use it. You know, it was, that was all new.

[00:31:52] **Interviewer:** Mm-hmm.

[00:31:53] **Shelley Goncalves:** Relatively new.

[00:31:56] **Interviewer:** I want to ask if there's anything else that you wanna say in regards to 16th Street Station?

[00:32:06] **Shelley Goncalves:** To?

[00:32:06] **Interviewer:** Any last words you would like to say in regards to 16th Street Station?

[00:32:10] **Shelley Goncalves:** Just that I know West Oakland has an old and deep history from many immigrants to African Americans to a real mixture now which is great to see. Bart Station is close. And I would just like to see it continue to thrive and I think that station would be—certainly would draw people. Especially, if they had events, artist events, music events. And if they had—if somehow they could incorporate a large and safe play area for children with lessons on gardening. As I'm fond of saying, you can take a stick and put it in Oakland soil and something will happen [laughs]. True. In most—a lot of places in Oakland, yeah.

[00:33:10] **Interviewer:** I didn't know that. I love that [Shelley laughs]. Well I want to thank you for your time, for recording, and for answering my questions.

[00:33:21] **Shelley Goncalves:** You're welcome. I'm sorry I kind of went off subject, but you asked about my family and I'm sorry I don't know more about the West Oakland—the 16th street train station. But that memory is vivid my mind.

[00:33:38] **Interviewer:** No, I love, I love you sharing that, that's why I kept expanding. I wanted to know more though [Shelley laughs], and I liked you going, quote, unquote off topic.

[00:33:46] **Shelley Goncalves:** Okay.

[00:33:47] **Interviewer:** There actually is no such thing as going off topic [Shelley chuckles]. I think I learned more about you. I'm going to end the recording now.